

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03  
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01  
EB-08 TRSE-00 OMB-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 /073 W  
-----262103Z 055078 /71

R 261648Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3904  
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN  
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS  
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY ROME  
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE  
USMISSION NATO  
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM  
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI  
AMEMBASSY OSLO

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E.O.: 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, DA  
SUBJ: WHY ELECTIONS NOW? WHAT TO EXPECT?

REFS: (A) COPENHAGEN 466, (B) COPENHAGEN 420, (C) 76 COPENHAGEN  
4909

SUMMARY PRIME MINISTER ANKER JORGENSEN MAY WELL HAVE DECIDED  
SOME WEEKS AGO THAT EARLY ELECTIONS WERE UNAVOIDABLE. AT LEAST  
THE LIBERALS BELIEVE THIS AND ALTHOUGH UNENTHUSIASTIC OVER ELEC-  
TIONS NOW, THEY PROBABLY CONCLUDED THAT THEY HAD LEAST TO LOSE  
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BY REMAINING IDENTIFIED AS THE ONLY VIABLE OPPOSITION TO THE  
SOCIAL DEMOCRATS. OPINION POLLS SHOW THAT THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS,  
GLISTRUP'S PROGRESSIVES AND THE FAR LEFT WILL MAKE ADVANCES. THE  
PARTIES OF THE CENTER-RIGHT WILL LOSE GROUND. THIS RESULT MIGHT  
WELL ALLOW THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS TO SHAKE OFF THE FUTURE NECESSITY  
OF PROCEEDING TO GOVERN BY A SERIES OF LABORIOUSLY-CONSTRUCTED  
COMPROMISES. BUT A LONG-SHOT POSSIBILITY THAT AN UNFROZEN GLI-

STRUP MIGHT BE ALLOWED TO TEAM UP WITH THE "RESPONSIBLE" CENTER-RIGHT PARTIES TO TOPPLE THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS SHOULD BE EXAMINED.  
END SUMMARY.

1. REF A EXAMINES THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO CALL ELECTIONS FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF THE LARGELY ECONOMIC ISSUES INVOLVED. THE PRESENT MESSAGE SPECULATES THAT SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PRIME MINISTER ANKER JORGENSEN HAD DECIDED IN PRINCIPLE SOME WEEKS AGO THAT ELECTIONS WERE PROBABLY UNAVOIDABLE (REF C). SUCH A DECISION WOULD HAVE BEEN MADE IN THE WAKE OF THE TRAUMA FELT THROUGHOUT THE DANISH SOCIETY AS A RESULT OF THE TANK TRUCK DRIVERS STRIKE IN LATE NOVEMBER AND IN THE EXPECTATION OF BITTER LABOR MARKET NEGOTIATIONS IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS. THESE NEGOTIATIONS WILL PROBABLY BE UNSUCCESSFUL AND THE GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE TO MAKE AN UNPOPULAR INTERVENTION TO RESOLVE THEM.

2. UNLESS HE WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GET THE LIBERALS FULLY BEHIND HIM (AN IMPROBABILITY), JORGENSEN PROBABLY VIEWED ELECTIONS AS INDISPENSIBLE TO "CLEAR THE AIR" WITH THE HOPE THAT HE AND HIS PARTY WOULD BE RETURNED WITH A REVITALIZED AND EXPANDED MANDATE.

3. IN THE FINAL EVENT HE WAS UNABLE TO ACHIEVE FULL AGREEMENT WITH THE PARTIES OF THE CENTER-RIGHT ON THE PACKAGE OF FOUR ELEMENTS WHICH MADE UP HIS LEGISLATIVE PLANS. BUT, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE LIBERALS, A COMPROMISE MIGHT HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED WITH THE OTHER CENTER-RIGHT PARTIES. THERE IS EVEN TALK THAT THE RADICALS--IN ORDER TO AVOID PREDICTABLE LOSSES IN THE NEW ELECTIONS--WERE WILLING TO STEP BACK FROM THEIR DEMANDS FOR AN AS-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SURED REOPENING OF A NEW DEFENSE AGREEMENT.

4. A COMPROMISE WITHOUT THE LIBERALS, HOWEVER, WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO MARSHALL ONLY A ONE-VOTE MAJORITY IN THE FOLKETING AND THE PRIME MINISTER HAD PRESUMABLY CONCLUDED THAT THIS MARGIN WAS TOO NARROW FOR HIM TO CARRY THROUGH POLICIES THAT WOULD RECEIVE ONLY RELUCTANT SUPPORT, OR OUTRIGHT OPPOSITION, FROM SUBSTANTIAL ELEMENTS IN THE DANISH ELECTORATE.

5. APPARENTLY THE REALLY STICKY ISSUE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE LIBERALS WAS--AS IT HAS SO OFTEN BEEN IN PAST DANISH POLITICAL MANEUVERINGS--THE QUESTION OF TAXES AND RENTS AS THEY EFFECT PRIVATE DWELLINGS. ANKER JORGENSEN WANTED RENT CEILINGS HELD ON GOVERNMENT-FINANCED HOUSING. THE LIBERALS WOULD ACCEPT THIS ONLY IF TAX CEILINGS WERE ESTABLISHED FOR PRIVATE HOME OWNERS AND OWNERS OF AGRICULTURAL LAND. THE GOVERNMENT WAS WILLING TO PAY THIS PRICE.

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6. THE LIBERALS, WHO ALSO FACED ELECTION LOSSES, WERE PROBABLY NOT ENTHUSIASTIC OVER THE PROSPECT OF GOING TO THE COUNTRY. LIBERAL LEADER POUL HARTLING, HOWEVER, HAS STATED THAT HE IS CONVINCED THAT ANKER JORGENSEN WAS DETERMINED TO PUSH AHEAD ON THE ELECTION ROAD ALMOST REGARDLESS OF HIS PROSPECTS OF GETTING AGREEMENT ON HIS LEGISLATIVE PLANS. IN THIS SITUATION, THE LIBERALS ARE PROBABLY RIGHT IN THEIR JUDGMENT THAT IT WAS PREFERABLE FOR THEM TO REMAIN IDENTIFIED AS THE ONLY VIABLE OPPOSITION PARTY TO THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS. (IT IS TO BE RECALLED THAT IN DECEMBER 1974, THE THEN LIBERAL PRIME MINISTER HARTLING, DETECTED AN ILLUSORY LACK OF SUPPORT IN THE FOLKETING IN ORDER TO CALL ELECTIONS AT  
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A TIME WHEN OPINION POLLS RIGHTLY INDICATED THAT THE LIBERALS

WOULD INCREASE THEIR PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION).

7. THE ELECTION CALL HAS BEEN RECEIVED WITH ENTHUSIASM BY NO ONE. NEITHER THE MEDIA NOR POLITICAL LEADERS WHO HAVE COMMENTED BELIEVE THAT ELECTIONS WILL REALLY ADVANCE SOLUTIONS TO THE COUNTRY'S PROBLEMS. THE JANUARY 23 EDITION OF THE LARGE COPENHAGEN DAILY, POLITIKEN (INDEPENDENT LEFT-OF-CENTER), DESCRIBED THE ELECTION AS A "PARADOX" AND "A THREAT TO THE INCOMES POLICY THAT ALMOST ALL AGREE IS A MUST". THE INFLUENTIAL BERLINGSKE TIDENDE (INDEPENDENT CONSERVATIVE OF JANUARY 23 LABELED THE REASON BEHIND THE ELECTIONS AS "NEBULOUS" AND DESCRIBED AS "IRRESPONSIBLE" THE CALL ON THE VOTER TO BE THE ARBITER OF WHETHER ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER VIOLATED PARLIAMENTARY ETIQUETTE BY NOT ACCEPTING A COMPROMISE. THE PAPER FEARED THAT THE ELECTION OUTLOOK MIGHT PRODUCE "A PUZZLE THAT WILL BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO SOLVE".

8. ALTHOUGH CHANGES IN THE PRESENT OPINION POLLS MAY WELL BE REGISTERED AS A RESULT OF THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN, THE "PUZZLE" THAT BERLINGSKE FEARS SHAPES UP ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES: A SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC ADVANCE; LOSSES BY THE LIBERALS, RADICALS, CHRISTIANS, CENTER-DEMOCRATS AND CONSERVATIVES; GAINS FOR MOGENS GLISTRUP'S PROGRESSIVES AND INCREASES FOR THOSE PARTIES TO THE LEFT OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS (THE COMMUNISTS, THE SOCIALIST PEOPLES PARTY AND THE LEFT SOCIALISTS).

9. THE NEW SITUATION, IF IT DEVELOPS APPROXIMATELY ALONG THE LINES DESCRIBED ABOVE, WOULD LEAVE A STRENGTHENED SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY POSITIONED SLIGHTLY TO THE LEFT OF CENTER IN THE DANISH POLITICAL SPECTRUM FACING A DEPLETED "LEGITIMATE" OPPOSITION AMONG THE FORMERLY ALLIED PARTIES OF THE CENTER AND RIGHT AND WITH INCREASED REPRESENTATION ON THE EXTREMES. IT IS DOUBTFUL, HOWEVER, THAT THE TWO EXTREMES WOULD BE ABLE TO COME TOGETHER ON ANY IMPORTANT ISSUE TO UPSET THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS. THE LATTER, WITH A RENEWED AND ENLARGED MANDATE FROM THE DANISH VOTERS, WOULD THEN BE ABLE TO PUSH AHEAD WITH THE SOLUTIONS TO THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PROBLEMS FACING DENMARK THAT THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS BELIEVE IN.

10. THEY WOULD HOPE THAT THE REDUCED REPRESENTATION OF MOST OF THE CENTER-RIGHT PARTIES WOULD MEAN THAT THEY COULD MINIMIZE THE TIME-CONSUMING NEGOTIATIONS INVOLVED IN CONTINUING THE LABORIOUS PROCESS OF CAREFULLY PATCHING TOGETHER A SERIES OF COMPROMISES WITH A SHIFTING GROUP OF OTHER PARTIES. AND THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS ALSO JUDGE THAT THEY COULD AVOID ELECTIONS A FEW MONTHS FROM NOW WHEN THEY WOULD BE MORE VULNERABLE TO ATTACK IN PARLIAMENT.

11. THE CATCH IN THIS REASONING IS THE POSSIBILITY (ALBEIT REMOTE) OF ACTIVE COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE "RESPONSIBLE" CENTER-RIGHT PARTIES AND A STRONGER GLISTRUP REPRESENTATION IN PARLIA-

MENT. THIS UNLIKELY COLLABORATION WILL BE EXAMINED IN A SUBSE-  
QUENT MESSAGE.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009